



Vocal Music Workshop

Jayne Schuitema, executive director

Mark Jackson, music director

The Vocal Music Workshop Changing Lives Through Choir

The Vocal Music Workshop is multicultural and inclusive, a creative company with diversity as one of its core aesthetics. And we BELIEVE in the power of music. Everything we do has the goal of changing lives in mind. We've seen the positive effects of singing in our own lives and of others'. Everyone in the organization is deeply committed to the cause of enriching the lives of our family members and community through music. Because music changes lives.

This energetic and innovative community organization teaches music and singing fundamentals, and produces fun, imaginative and educational performances with youth starting in grade 3, all the way up through adults. These choirs stage unique and exciting performances for all ages throughout the year.

Programs are grouped into 4 main areas, Community Wide After School Choirs, In School Choirs, After School Intensive Programs, and Summer Programming. These choirs perform together, separately, and with other performing groups as partners. Together these programs reach 400 children and families throughout the year. In addition we have a small vocal ensemble for adults.

These students are exposed to the history and culture of music performed. They meet and work with industry professionals, attend concerts and other cultural events such as the GR Public Museum, Art Prize, Hitsville USA, and other Detroit arts institutions. And our students travel outside of the state and internationally.

The life lessons and skills learned through singing in a choir are unparalleled and priceless. We are dedicated to providing choral music experiences to as many children, youth and adults in the Grand Rapids area as we possibly can.

The VMW charges \$50 per student to participate in Chorale. We significantly lowered tuition costs because it was a financial barrier that could not be overcome by many families, and because we believe that each child deserves the same opportunities. Participation in all other VMW programs is completely free of charge.

Mark Jackson - Music Director

Mark Jackson joined the Vocal Music Workshop as its Music Director in May, 2009. His professional experience includes singing on national jingles, records and live background vocals, performing the role of Tom Collins in RENT on Broadway, appearances on national TV including Good Morning America, Regis and Cathy Lee and the Oprah Winfrey Show. Mark's classroom and conducting experiences have included teaching jazz history at Grand Rapids Community College, directing the college's Shades of Blue vocal jazz ensemble in the New York City Jazz Festival at Jazz At Lincoln Center, conducting the Vocal Music Workshop's *Star Wars In Concert* choir at Van Andel Arena, and participating in various clinics and workshops at schools throughout West Michigan. He received his masters degree in jazz performance from Western Michigan University.

Jayne Schuitema - Executive Director

Music and art has been a part of Jayne's life from childhood on. She went to concerts and art museums, took the requisite lessons, and played the clarinet in school. Even though becoming anything more than the most amateur middle school musician was not in the cards, the life-long benefits of music education became abundantly clear to her. Because of this she made sure her children were able to benefit from having art and music in their young lives but soon discovered that for a huge number of kids that was not the case....leading her to the founding of the Vocal Music Workshop in 1998. Jayne was driven to find ways to make the VMW as diverse as the city itself and making choral music accessible and relevant to ALL young people of the area. To make that a reality she began a satellite in school choral program in Grand Rapids Public School buildings, bringing choral music to schools where there was none. Under Jayne's leadership, Vocal Music Workshop singers have toured to places as diverse as Des Moines, Iowa and Accra, Ghana...and performed in New York City for the Friends of the United Nations and in Dublin Ireland to help raise money for the Irish Special Olympics.

Resources:

Advocacy:

John Bracy, Michigan Council for Art and Cultural Affairs
Gov. Rick Snyder
Your local state legislators
Local Arts Councils
Target - Funding for arts education
Amway - One by One
Extended Learning Opportunities - Grand Rapids

Integrating Art and Music Into Academic Subjects:

Arts Edge from the Kennedy Center

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators.aspx>

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/interactives/jazzintime/timeline.html>

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/multimedia/series>

If you are interested in finding more resources please visit our website - www.vocalmusicworkshop.org